

Bush Administration Drug Policy in the United States: A Record of Success

Prevention

Recent Successes:

- Despite being outspent by as much as 30 to 1, initiatives that would legalize or decriminalize marijuana and other drugs failed last year in Nevada, Ohio, Arizona, and Missouri. This marks a significant change in public opinion regarding drug-policy.
- Anti-drug coalitions, which work to stem drug use locally, now number over 5,000.

Demand Reduction

According to University of Michigan's *Monitoring the Future* study:

- Use of **any illicit drug** in the past year **decreased** by a statistically significant amount from 2001 to 2002 among 8th and 10th graders. Use at least once in the student's lifetime declined among 8th graders, and use in the past month declined among tenth graders. The percentages of 8th and 10th graders using any illicit drug were at **their lowest level since 1993 and 1995**, respectively.
- Among 10th graders, **marijuana use** in the past year and past month **decreased** from 2001 to 2002, and daily use in the past month was down as well. The past-year marijuana use rate of 14.6 percent among 8th graders is the **lowest level seen since 1994**.
- **Ecstasy use** in the past year and past month **decreased significantly among 10th graders** from 2001 to 2002. Ecstasy use was down in all three grades. Past-year use rates were below those for year 2000 in each grade. This is a major turning point.
- Lifetime and past-year **LSD use decreased significantly** among 8th, 10th and 12th graders. Past-year and past-month LSD use by 12th graders reached the lowest point in the 28-year history of the survey.
- Lifetime **use of inhalants decreased** in 8th and 10th graders, and past year use declined for 8th graders.

Long-Term Successes, according to the *National Household Survey on Drug Abuse*:

- Adolescent **drug use was prevalent in less than 1 percent** of twelve-to seventeen-year-olds in **1962**. By **1979, that number peaked at 34 percent**. By then, **65 percent of high-school seniors had tried an illicit drug**, 39 percent were using drugs monthly, and 1 in 9 smoked marijuana daily. Young peoples' alcohol use paralleled their drug use, and while the death rate for all other age groups declined, **adolescents' death rate rose by 8 percent**, an increase fueled by the unprecedented upsurge in drug use.

- Political leadership, an increased stigma attached to drug use, parent groups, and other community organizations drove down drug use between 1979 and 1992. This effort **cut regular drug use in half among all Americans (from 25 million to 11 million), by two thirds among adolescents and young adults, and cut daily marijuana use among seniors by 500 percent (from 11 percent to 2 percent).**
- Though rising again in the mid-nineties, drug use has fallen again.

Treatment

- Drug courts, court supervised programs where arrestees receive treatment in lieu of incarceration, are expanding rapidly. As of August 2004, **there are nearly 1,500 drug courts in existence or being planned around the country.**
 - American University's Drug Court Clearinghouse reports that over 400,000 drug-using offenders have participated in drug court programs since their inception in 1989. In 1997, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) reported that 71% of all offenders entering drug courts since 1989 have either successfully completed their drug court program or are currently actively participating in their program.
 - **Recidivism** among all drug court participants has ranged from **5 to 28%** and **less than 4%** for drug court graduates.¹
- The Federal government has sponsored the **Cannabis Youth Treatment Study (CYT)**, which has developed innovative and effective treatment methodologies.
 - Using these treatment approaches, the percentage of youth reporting abstinence from intake went from **4% to 13% (3 months) to 34% (6 months) & those with no past month symptoms of substance-abuse related problems went from 19% to 39% (3 months) to 61% (6 months).**²
- When fully implemented, the President's **Access to Recovery Initiative** will reach 300,000 people otherwise unable to receive individualized drug treatment from a variety of community sources.

Supply Reduction

- President Uribe has made substantial progress over the past two years. He has shown that when democracy, stability and security flourish, progress can be made against the narco-terrorists who threaten our way of life.
 - U.S. estimates of coca eradication have shown a dramatic drop of 21 percent in coca cultivation in Colombia for 2003. Net coca cultivation dropped from

¹ *Looking At A Decade of Drug Courts.* Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project at American University, Washington D.C. 1999.

² *CYT Experiment: Preliminary Findings*, Sept. 2000.

144,450 hectares in 2002 to 113,850 hectares in 2003. This compares to 169,800 hectares cultivated during the peak growing year of 2001.

- According to the GOC, the number of kidnappings in Colombia has almost halved in the first half of this year. 966 people were abducted in the first six months of 2004, compared with 1,906 in the same period last year
- In Mexico, intensive efforts have resulted in the eradication of 36,600 hectares of marijuana. Mexico also eradicated 20,000 hectares of opium poppy.
- Major progress continues to be made in both interdicting drugs (those manufactured in Mexico as well as those being transshipped through Mexico) and attacking drug trafficking organizations and cartel leadership. In 2003, Mexican law enforcement agencies seized 2,019 metric tons of marijuana, 191 kilograms of opium gum, 289 kilograms of heroin, 20 metric tons of cocaine, and 726 kilograms of methamphetamine.
- In April, Mexican Authorities Captured Otto Herrera Central America's Most-Wanted Drug Smuggler. Herrera had been linked to Cali cartel in Colombia and has cooperated with reputed Mexican kingpin Ismael 'El Mayo' Zambada, whose drug smuggling syndicate is thought to be based in the resort city of Mazatlan. In August of 2004, Mexican authorities captured Gilberto Higuera Guerrero, a drug trafficker accused of handling half of the illegal drugs smuggled into the U.S. from Mexico.

Research

- The National Institute on Drug Abuse now funds over 85% of the world's research on drugs, and their budget has been increased \$36 million to \$996 million in FY 2004.